

June 29 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

will affect moderate-income debtors, it is unfair to leave this loophole for the wealthy in place.

I remain concerned that the negotiations have produced a bill that has lost some of the balance that the Senate bill had tried to achieve, albeit imperfectly from my perspective. As a result of all these concerns, I will veto the bill that we understand the Republicans plan to forward to my desk. But I continue to urge Congress to reconsider and send me a fair bill that meets the test of balance.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on a Payment to the Russian Aviation and Space Agency

June 29, 2000

Dear _____:

The NASA Administrator has informed me of his intent to proceed with an extraordinary payment of \$14 million to the Russian Aviation and Space Agency for the purchase of the pressure dome for the Interim Control Module and the Androgynous Peripheral Docking Adapter and related hardware for the United States Propulsion Module for the International Space Station. This payment is subject to the provisions of section 6(g) of the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-178) (the "Act").

I hereby notify the Congress that, upon the expiration of the 5-day period specified in section 6(g)(1)(A) of the Act, the payment described above will be made. I have also concluded that the conditions described in section 6(g)(1)(B) and (C) of the Act have been satis-

fied. Specifically, no report has been made under section 2 of the Act; I have no credible information of any activity that would require such a report; and, the United States will receive goods of value to the United States commensurate with the value of the extraordinary payment.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations; F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., chairman, House Committee on Science; Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; John McCain, chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; and selected Representatives and Senators.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

June 29, 2000

Thank you. If I had any sense, I wouldn't say a word after that. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, Margo. I want to thank you and Briggs for opening your beautiful home. I had a great time. They took me in through the ground floor, where there are all the golf clubs and golf pictures. *[Laughter]* I almost didn't make it up here to you, folks. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank you all for helping Sanford Bishop. I have a lot of friends here. In case any of you think I was scandalizing Ada HOLLINGSWORTH, we've been friends for more than 20 years, so it's okay. *[Laughter]* And Calvin Smyre was with me in 1991, when only my mother thought I could be elected President. *[Laughter]* Jesse Brown and Secretary West and

Ron Dellums and I—I miss him in the Congress, and so many of the rest of you here. I thank you for being here for him.

Sanford, I thank you for everything you said, and especially for that poem. People used to tell me in the tough times in the last 8 years that the good Lord never gives you more to carry than you can carry. And I thought, “Well, he’s certainly tested the envelope with me.” [Laughter] There was a time or two you could have fooled me. [Laughter]

People ask me all the time, “Well, what did you do? How did you do all that?” And I don’t have much of an answer, except I got up every day and realized that all those people that were kind of after me, didn’t hire me in the first place, that people like you hired me, and I just figured if I worked on my job and treated the rest as the cost of doing business in the 1990’s, that everything would work out all right. And it sort of did.

I want to say to you that, you know, I do a fair number of these; I always try to help our Members, our Representatives and our Senators. It’s very important to me. But it was especially important to me to be here tonight because I think that Sanford Bishop represents what, to me, is the best in our party and in our country and, to me, the best hope of our becoming a majority party again.

Look at all the people who are here tonight. He’s got people from the agricultural community, people from the industrial community. He’s got the friends he grew up with, which to me is always the acid test. [Laughter] I’m the only guy you ever met who got elected because of his friends. Nobody ever got elected just because he has friends, before. But I believe that—you know, because they’ll like you if you’re running a service station. [Laughter] And that’s pretty important.

I want you to know that this guy has served well, and he has had to take a lot of tough votes. For some of our Members, everything I wanted to do—they’ve been in totally safe seats. They’ve had people that thought sort of just like we did, and they never had to cast a tough vote. There is no telling how many tough votes this man has had to cast to get our economy turned around, to get the crime rate down, to do things that were right.

So he could have read that poem about himself. And I wanted to be here for that reason. Because if we can’t command the support of

people like the ones he represents in Georgia, we can’t really be a majority party. So I admire him, I like him, and I’m grateful.

Now, I just want you to know three things about this election—tell you everything you need to know. Number one, it is real important. It’s just as important as the elections of ’92 and ’96 were. And in 1992, as Sanford said, this country was in deep trouble. One of the biggest problems the Vice President has got today in this election is, everybody has forgotten what it was like before we showed up. They sort of pocket that, take it for granted. This country was in trouble.

But to be fair, we knew what we had to do. We knew we had to change the economic policy. We knew we had to change the social policy. We knew if we were going to get the crime rate down and reduce welfare, reduce poverty, lift children up, grow the economy, help people who were left out and left behind work themselves into the middle class, we had to change things. And so we did. And then in ’96, we knew that if we wanted it to work, we had to ratify that, we had to build that bridge to the 21st century, in the slogan of our campaign.

This election is just as important. Why? Because how a country chooses to deal with its moments of prosperity and promise is just as stern a test of our judgment, even our character, as how we deal with adversity.

There are a lot of young people here tonight, and I’m really glad, a lot of young people working for Sanford and working this event. And I’m grateful for that, and I like that. We even have a young woman from Russia here tonight. There you are. You’re welcome here. We’re glad to have you here.

But I want to say something here to the people that aren’t so young. [Laughter] No, wait a minute. Calm down. There is not a person in this audience tonight over 30 who cannot remember at least one time in your life when you made a humdinger of a mistake, either a personal mistake or a business mistake, not because things were going so badly but because things were going so well, you thought there was no penalty to the failure to concentrate.

And that’s what we’ve got to deal with in this election and the congressional races and the Senate races and the Presidential race. So the first thing is, this is really important. In my lifetime, our country has never had at the

same time so much economic prosperity, social progress, national self-confidence with the absence of gripping, paralyzing crisis at home or threat abroad.

Now, what are we going to do with it? That's what this election is about. What do we propose to do with a truly magic moment? And it is a very stern test of our judgment, as well as our character and our values.

The second thing I want to say to you is: There are real differences between the two parties. And you don't have to be hateful to say that. I tell everybody, you know, we can really have a positive election this year because we can talk about the honest differences in our different vision of what we ought to do with this moment. And that's great. We've had enough elections over the last 20 years when the candidates tried to convince the voters that their opponents were just one notch above a car thief. [Laughter] And you know what I'm talking about. We don't have to do this. We can assume that everybody is honorable and that they mean exactly what they say. But there are real differences.

The third thing I want you to remember—and this is the kicker; this ought to tell you who you ought to vote for—only the Democrats want you to know what those differences are. [Laughter] Now, what does that tell you? It's interesting, the Republicans, who sort of pioneered this sort of mean, vicious campaign—what they did to McCain in the primary was embarrassing even to those of us who thought we'd seen it all. [Laughter] And now they all take the position that if you talk about how they voted or where they stand, you're running a negative campaign. If you give the voters information that's relevant to the decisions that are going to be made about their future, that's somehow going negative, and that's bad. I don't agree with that. Going negative is when you attack your opponent personally, when you say there is something wrong with their character, their value system; they're bad people.

But why have an election if you're not going to have a debate? But you just remember those three things: It's an important election; there are real differences; only the Democrats want you to know what they are.

Now, lest you think I'm kidding, there was a story in the press a few days ago saying that the Republicans in the House, where Sanford served, had hired a pollster to tell them what

words or phrases to use so they could convince the people that they're for a drug benefit for all the disabled and senior citizens on Medicare, even though they're not.

Now, this is not what you normally hire a pollster for. At least, I don't. Normally, you hire a pollster to figure out how you're doing in an election, whether what you believe in is flying, and not to change your positions but to change your campaign, emphasize other issues some. But this is—it's astonishing—hire a pollster to give you the words and phrases so that the people will think you're for something you're not, that is, to blur the differences. And I see this all over.

But there are differences. We're for a Patients' Bill of Rights that is real and enforceable, and they're not, by and large. I'm talking about the leadership and the vast majority. And we're for a comprehensive Medicare drug benefit for senior citizens, and they're not. And we're for a tax cut, but one that helps people educate their kids or pay for child care or pay long-term care for family members that you've got to take care of, but that's affordable so we don't spend all this projected surplus, and we can keep paying the debt down and preserve Medicare and Social Security for the next generation, when all us baby boomers retire. And they don't agree with that. They really believe that you can take all this non-Social Security surplus right now and commit to spend it all on tax cuts or their Social Security plan, their missile defense plan, the other spending things—just spend it all.

Now, if I were to ask you tonight, what is your projected income over the next 10 years, you would all have a different answer. And then I said, "Okay, how much confidence do you have that this is your projected income?" And you say, "Oh, I'm more than 50 percent sure." I'd say, "Great. Now, I want you to sign on the dotted line—here's a piece of paper—that you're going to spend every nickel of it right now, and you can't get out of it for the next 10 years." That's their plan.

And I'm just telling you, we didn't get to where we are today without being careful. Interest rates are low. If you keep interest rates a point lower for the next decade than they would otherwise be—do you know what that's worth to you? Two hundred and fifty billion dollars in lower home mortgages alone—in lower home mortgages alone.

So we don't have the more popular side of this argument. They're saying, "Hey, we'll give it all back to you right now. We know what our income is going to be for the next 10 years, and we're going to sign it away." And we say, "Excuse me, but we were in debt" We had quadrupled our national debt in the 12 years before our side showed up, and now we're going to pay off \$400 billion of our debt before I leave office, and I'd like to get this country out of debt so these kids will always have low interest rates and be able to afford a college loan, a car loan, a home mortgage, and we'll be able to keep growing this economy. It's a huge difference. It's huge.

And I could go through issue after issue—the hate crimes legislation, the environmental position, in the Presidential race, the appointments—two to four people to the Supreme Court. Did you see all these decisions that came out this week? Five to four, six to three. There are going to be two to four appointments in the Supreme Court. Either one of them will change the balance of the Supreme Court—either one. The question is, how do you want it to go?

So here you've got this guy who is, I think, a really stand-up person. There are so many times in the last 8 years when it would have been easy for him to take a dive and call me on the phone and say, "Now listen, man, you're my buddy, but I've got a problem"—[*laughter*]"—and my district is not like the whole rest of America, you know; it's rural. And I've got all these farmers, and they think I'm a little too, you know, maybe close to you anyway. I don't know." [*Laughter*] I mean, just time after time, when we really needed somebody to stand up, he stood up. So I'm glad you're here helping him. But I want you to leave here committed to help shape this political environment.

This election is going to be fine. The American people normally get it right, if they have enough information and enough time to digest it. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here. We're the oldest big democracy in the whole history of the planet. And other people think it's a pretty good idea because over the last 8 or 9 years, we've had more people living under democratic

governments than nondemocratic governments for the first time in all of human history, around the world.

Russia, where she is from, they just had their first transition from one democratically elected President to another in a thousand years. This works if people have enough information and enough time to digest it. So I have absolute confidence in the outcome of this election if the people have enough information and enough opportunity to digest it. But you've got to help that.

The only problem here is, good times are full of danger as well as opportunity. So you sort of slide along here and think, well, there is not really much difference; these two guys seem pretty nice; our side had it for 8 years, maybe we should give their side a chance—you know, just sort of, blah, blah, blah. I've heard all this stuff. [*Laughter*]

And I'm telling you, you just remember, if people ask you about the election, you say, "It is really important, and I want you to take it seriously." If you meet a Republican, an independent, anybody, you tell them that. In a lifetime you may get one chance—one chance—to set a course in times as good as this. Even the kids here may never see another time like this. And then the second thing you tell them is, there are real differences, and you should listen to both sides. And then the third thing you tell them is, however—a key to who you'll agree with is—only the Democrats really want you to know what the differences are. And the final thing is, a guy like Sanford Bishop, he can always make all the difference.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:17 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Fernal and Margo Briggs; Ada Hollingsworth, owner, A&A Travel Services; former Georgia State Representative Calvin Smyre; former Representative Ron Dellums; former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown; and Senator John McCain. Representative Bishop was a candidate for reelection in Georgia's Second Congressional District.

Remarks to the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal
Employees in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
June 30, 2000

Thank you. Well, you know, I was still a little sleepy when I got here today. *[Laughter]* I'm pumped. Thank you very much. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Mr. President McEntee, congratulations on your reelection. Your job has some advantages over mine—no term limits, no opponents. Not bad.

I'm delighted to be here with all your officers—Will Lucy, it's good to see you again, and all the AFSCME officers. I do want to say a special word of appreciation to the vice presidents from Pennsylvania who are hosting you—Edward Keller, Henry Nicholas, Dave Fillman. And I want to acknowledge in the audience a good friend of AFSCME's down in Washington whom I brought home to Pennsylvania with me today, Congressman Joe Hoeffel. Give him a big hand. *[Applause]* Joe, thank you for coming with me.

Let me just say at the outset, I know everything I'm going to say today will not be news to you. It's almost like preaching to the saved. But the most important thing that I can say today is a simple thank you. I am so grateful for the support you've given me and for the work we've done together. Thank you.

It is fitting that one of America's greatest labor unions is meeting here in Philadelphia in the millennial year. This city is rich in labor history. In 1774 the very first Continental Congress met in Carpenter's Hall, which was built by the very first trade guild in America. In 1792 the shoemakers here in Philadelphia formed the first local craft union for collective bargaining over 200 years ago. And just as you are in a city with deep labor roots, you are looking at a President who feels he has deep roots in AFSCME.

When I was eligible as Governor, I was a dues-paying member of AFSCME. All the people who worked for me back then said it was the only check they ever saw me write. *[Laughter]* I'm grateful for the work you do every day, watching over our children and our parents, taking care of the sick and people with disabilities, helping the poor and moving millions of people from welfare to work, supporting our schools, improving our environment, making

sure not just your members but all Americans have a better life.

And I am very grateful, as I said, that AFSCME has stood by me since early in 1992, when only my mama thought I could be elected President of the United States. In sunshine and rain, you have never backed down; you have never walked away from the good fight we have waged for the American people and their future.

And what a long way we've come in these 8 years. Gerry was talking about it before I came in. But it's worth remembering. In fact, one of the biggest challenges we have in this election is that things have been so good so long, a lot of people don't remember what it was like the last time they had the ball and they carried it.

Together, we've worked hard to give this country the longest economic expansion in history: 22 million-plus new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest crime rate in 25 years.

And a lot of things that you care about—the highest homeownership in history; 90 percent of our kids immunized against serious childhood illnesses for the first time in history; more land protected forever in the continental United States than any administration since Franklin Roosevelt; cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food—21 million people—21 million people have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law, the first law I signed and a law that was vetoed the last time they had the White House. Five hundred thousand felons, fugitives, and stalkers did not get handguns because of the Brady bill. We have a 35 percent drop in crime rates and in the gun crime. Not a single hunter has missed a day in the deer woods in spite of all their dire predictions. And the Brady law was another law that was vetoed the last time they had the White House.

Five million families have taken advantage of the HOPE scholarship tax credit for the first 2 years of college. And when I leave office,